1:Stanford U. S-4, 5 1956 AF12 North China AF12

than two or three generations.[2] These conditions accounted for the lack of a permanent ruling caste in China. There are definite ideals in traditional Chinese culture which conditioned the upward and downward mobility of the people within the social hierarchy.

B. Social Mobility

The Family Ideal. Large families, especially of the extended type, were the ideal in China.[3] However, in practice, the ideal was limited by matters of economics. Primogeniture in China had been done away with long before the Manchu Dynasty (1644-1912). Land was divided equally among sons. After successive divisions individual holdings became infinitesimally small. This contributed to the decline of the economic status of even the wealthiest families, particularly when land was the sole source of income.[4]

2. Martin Yang, A Chinese Village, New York, 1945, p. 132; Francis Hsu, Under the Ancestor's Shadow, New York, Columbia University Press, 1948, p. 4.

3. Consult the chapter on The Family.

4. "In the matter of inheritance, the general pattern observed for poor agriculturalists holds very well for the merchant group. Just as at the death of a farmer, there is a sharing of the property. In the agricultural situation, however, there seems to be greater fragmentation of the legacy, each son working his share more or less independently and with a minimum of combination. In the merchant situation there is somewhat more cohesion among the heirs, who often work the inherited enterprise as partners." Morton H. Fried, Fabric of Chinese Society, New York, 1953 p. 52.